

The Historical Trail 1984



Joseph Toy's old home still stands, facing the Delaware in Palmyra, N.J.

The Historical Trail

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The United Methodist Church

FOREWORD

It is good to hear of the variety of activities that are being held in the churches during the Bicentennial. In this issue of *The Historical Trail*, we offer you a paper by Rev. F. Elwood Perkins that tells us of *John Wesley's Problem with the American Revolution*. The subtitle is *How His Change of Mind Encouraged the Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America*.

Joseph Toy was a very influential layman and minister in New Jersey and other areas at the time of the forming of our Church. Mr. Lloyd E. Griscom writes: Early American Methodism: The Unique Career of a Pioneer. Dr. Robert J. Williams shares the attitudes of the ministers of the conference toward slavery in his article *The 1844 Showdown Over Slavery: The Church Divides*. The 1800's gave us some very influential Camp Meetings. One that is still in existence is Delanco Camp Meeting, once in the community of Delanco, now in Tabernacle Township. *The History of Delanco Camp Meeting* is written by Rev. H. Raymond Hughes.

Enjoy reading these articles at this time of our celebrating with thanksgiving to God the 200 years of the United Methodist Church.

DR. J. HILLMAN COFFEE
President-Editor

JOHN WESLEY'S PROBLEM WITH THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

HOW HIS CHANGE OF MIND ENCOURAGED THE
ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN AMERICA

by
F. Elwood Perkins

The best known of Wesley's political writings is probably the pamphlet entitled *A Calm Address to Our American Colonies* which was printed in the year 1775. When difficulties with the American colonies began, Wesley had considerable sympathy for the colonists. Various statements from time to time in his writings prove this. Through-out the first half of the year 1775, Wesley stood out against war-like action against the colonists and called for what then seemed to him to be a just consideration of their legal rights.

This note of appeasement in his sermons and letters was abruptly changed during the summer. The throwing of the tea into Boston harbor was a grievous abuse of liberty. "All this time they did not, in fact, pay one half, no, not a quarter, of those duties." There was "not any other alternative," but to take "some such step as was taken."¹ Two letters have been preserved for us, both written at this time, one addressed to Lord North, the prime minister, and the other to Lord Dartmouth, secretary of state for the colonies. His prejudices are against the Americans, he says, as he is a High Churchman and the son of a High Churchman; yet he thinks the Americans are asking for no more than their legal rights. "Is it common sense to use force against the Americans?" he asks. They are fighting enthusiasts of liberty and the Americans would not be easily frightened by an army of paid soldiers "none of whom cared a straw for the cause wherein they were engaged, and most of them strongly disapproved of it."²

About this time, too, Wesley wrote his brother Charles that he was in "danger of losing my love for the Americans; I mean for their miserable leaders; for the poor sheep are more sinned against than sinning."³

The *Calm Address* was published in a quarto sheet of four pages to be sold for a penny, and its purchasers, it is reported, numbered about forty thousand in the course of a few weeks. It turned out to be a bitter arraignment of the colonists and a defense of the course taken by the

English government on the matter of taxing America, practically a verbatim copy of a tract by Dr. Samuel Johnson entitled, *Taxation no Tyranny*. It was evident that Johnson had converted Wesley to his views. He maintains that Parliament has the power to tax the colonies and that it is not too much to expect that the colonies reimburse the mother country for at least part of the large expense she has been put to in their defense. The chief blame for the trouble among the colonies lies with certain men who desire to overthrow monarchy and establish a republican government. A wide and powerful influence was wielded by the pamphlet in shaping the opinion of the English people. The government was quick to see its usefulness and bought up an edition for distribution at the doors of all the churches in London. Officials asked whether the government could be of any service in appreciation for his support; but Wesley was not looking for any favors, though he later accepted fifty pounds from the privy purse for some of his charities.

The *Calm Address* aroused a tempest of controversy and brought down much abuse on Wesley's head. He was furiously denounced for his change of face and called all sorts of names. A clergyman of a Baptist Church in Bristol accused him, in a twenty-four page leaflet, of serious inconsistencies. Wesley, it seems, had advised Bristol Methodists, at a general election previously held, to vote for the candidate favouring the American cause and had also urged the study of a pamphlet called "An Argument in Defense of the Exclusive Right claimed by the Colonies to tax themselves." That circumstance Wesley had forgotten about and at first had denied this; however, on second thought, he candidly said that he believed he had done so, but was now of a different mind. Wesley's candour did not disarm his opponent who continued his attack calling attention to the "shameful versatility and disingenuity of this artful man."

One of his antagonists wrote *A Cool Reply to a Calm Address*, charging Wesley with being in quest of a "miter" though he ought "to sit in sackcloth and pour dust on his head." In a similar strain wrote the author of *A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing; or an Old Jesuit Unmasked*. Toplady, the bitter doctrinal foe of Wesley, made good use of this opportunity and brought forth a shameful diatribe entitled *An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feathered* accusing Wesley of stealing "shafts out of Doctor Johnson's pincushion." On the cover of the leaflet was the head of a fox in clerical robes.

Wesley defended his writing of the *Calm Address* in a letter published in Lloyd's "Evening Post" and incorporated in his *Journal*: "I have been seriously asked, 'From what motive did you publish your *Calm Address* to the American Colonies?'"

"I seriously answer, Not to get money. Had that been my motive, I should have swelled it into a shilling pamphlet, and have entered it at Stationers' Hall.

"Not to get preferment for myself, or my brother's children. I am little too old to gape after it for myself; and if my brother or I sought it for them, we have only to show them to the world.

"Not to please any man living, high or low. I know mankind too well. I know that they love you for political service, love you less than their dinner; and they that hate you, hate you worse than the devil.

"Least of all did I write with a view to inflame any: just the contrary. I contributed my mite toward putting out the flame which rages all over the land. This I have more opportunity of observing than any other man in England. I see with pain to what an height this already rises, in every part of the nation. And I see many pouring oil on the flame, by crying out, 'How unjustly, how cruelly, the King is using the poor Americans; who are only contending for their liberty, and for their legal privileges!'

"Now there is no possible way to put out this flame, or hinder its rising higher and higher, but to show that the Americans are not used either cruelly or unjustly; that they are not injured at all, seeing they are not contending for liberty (this they had, even in its full extent, both civil and religious); neither for any legal privileges; for they enjoy all that their charters grant. But what they contend for is the illegal privilege of being exempt from parliamentary taxation. A privilege this, which no charter ever gave to any American colony yet; which no charter can give, unless it be confirmed both by King, Lords, and Commons which, in fact, our colonies never had; which they never claimed till the present reign: and probably they would not have claimed it now, had they not been incited thereto by letters from England. One of these was read according to the desire of the writer, not only at the Continental Congress, but likewise in many congregations throughout the Combined Provinces. It advised them to seize upon all the King's officers; and exhorted them, 'Stand valiantly, only for six months, and in that time there will be much commotions in England that you may have your own terms!'

"This being the real state of the question, without my colouring or aggravation, what impartial man can either blame the King or commend the American?

"With this view, to quench the fire, by laying the blame where it was due, the *Calm Address* was written."

"Sir, I am

Your Humble servant

John Wesley"

THE TORY MIND OF WESLEY

Wesley's character, training, and career put him in the group which held to the Crown as the center of English loyalty and order of society. He "could not be trusted to look upon the Americans with understanding," wrote Bishop Francis J. McConnell; and, yet, though caught in the Tory fever, it is apparently true that "he had more right on his side than we Americans are disposed to admit." "Taxation without representation" had practically come to mean more to Americans than to the English, who had very little to say about taxation. The British taxes asked of Americans amounted to almost nothing. The Boston Tea Party was little less than vandalism. George III was a much stronger and better man and king than Americans ever have admitted. Wesley himself had to pay taxes without being represented in their assessment, and he could not see why the Americans had to declaim against "taxation without representation."⁶

By his own words, Wesley was a High Churchman which is equivalent to saying that he was a staunch Tory. In a letter to the *Gentlemen's Magazine* he plainly said that his brother "was a Tory, so was my father; so am I."⁶ In the crisis which England faced, Wesley instinctively rallied to the King and, thus, was led to forsake a policy and point of view which in a less critical time he might have continued to champion. Wesley believed in the goodness of the King's character; he had defended the Sovereign in the early pamphlet *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs* as one who feared God, believed and read the Bible, and loved his Queen. "His majesty's character, then, after all the pains which have been taken to make him contemptible, remains unimpeached; and therefore cannot be, in any degree, the cause of the present commotions. His whole conduct, both in public and private, ever since he began his reign, the uniform tenor of his behaviour, the general course both of his words and actions, has been worthy of an Englishman, worthy of a Christian, and worthy of a King."⁷

Wesley, too, was undoubtedly influenced in his turning to the support of the Crown by the unquestionably high moral tone of the court, especially as contrasting with that of the two previous reigns. Men like North, Craggs, and Dartmouth impressed the mind of Wesley quite favorably. Lord Dartmouth in particular was an evangelical Christian, a strong influence for good in the Church and quite friendly and sympathetic to Wesley in his spiritual labours. But Dartmouth was also Secretary of State for the Colonies and, later, Lord Privy Seal.

The next important political writing of Wesley appeared in 1776, a pamphlet entitled *Some Observations on Liberty Occasioned By a Late*

Tract.⁸ He wrote in answer to Dr. Richard Price's reasoned defense of the Colonists' position in a small work entitled, *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America*. Dr. Price was a learned author who had written extensively on financial and political matters. "As the author is a person of uncommon abilities, so he has exerted them to the uttermost in the tract before us, which is certainly a masterpiece of its kind," says Wesley himself at the beginning of his leaflet. Price was so friendly to the Americans that Congress invited him to come to America and to give assistance in regulating their finances. He had concluded his pamphlet with the observation that "this war is undertaken not only against the principles of our constitution, but our purpose to destroy other similar constitutions in America; and to substitute in their room a military."

Wesley in his reply contends that the colonists have both civil and religious liberty, but what they aim is not liberty, but "independency."⁹ Altogether, he states clearly the Tory side of the controversy; the people have as much liberty as many in England, and they tax themselves in the same sense as nine-tenths of Englishmen do. "Millions in England have no more voices in the parliament than they; yet that does not exempt them from subjection to the government and the laws."¹⁰ Referring to the inflaming of the minds of the people a few years before through incendiary papers Wesley says that "The natural tendency, or rather the avowed design, of this pamphlet, is to kindle it again; if it be possible, to blow up into a flame the sparks that yet remain; to make the minds of his majesty's subjects, both at home and abroad, evil-affected toward his government; discontented in the midst of plenty, out of humour with God and man; to persuade them, in spite of all sense and reason, that they are absolute slaves, while they are actually possessed of the greatest civil and religious liberty that the condition of human life allows.

"Let all who are real lovers of their country use every lawful means to put, or at least prevent the increase of, that flame which, otherwise, may consume our people and nation."¹¹

Another pamphlet published in 1776 bears the lengthy title, *A Seasonable Address to the More Serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain Respecting the Unhappy Contest between Us and Our American Brethren: with an occasional word interspersed to those of a different complexion. By a Lover of Peace*. (Printed in the Year 1776) It is a plea for a united England. "Unhappy, very unhappy for us, we are a kingdom divided against itself."¹² If our own or our neighbor's house were on fire we would bring "no combustible matter to increase the

flame, but water and a helping hand to extinguish it." "Now," he says, "apply this to America and Great Britain."¹³ He addresses "ye friends of America," then "ye friends of government," and finally, "ye Americans," imploring each to turn his eyes from those they suspect of the present evil. Rather "Let no individual attempt to clear himself from the dreadful charge of being accessory to . . . the misery and wretchedness in general, and the present distress in particular." "Let no one presume to look on himself as unconcerned and innocent. Let no one "wipe his mouth and say, What harm have I done? but, rather, let him know that his sin in particular has added to the general account, and not a little contributed to the divine retribution."¹⁴

During the following year appeared Wesley's *Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England*. (Printed in the year 1777)¹⁵ It has now been a year and a half since he had written his *Calm Address to Our American Colonies*, and he evidently considered that it had served a useful purpose, for he states that its effect had exceeded his expectations, which encouraged him now to address a tract to the inhabitants of old England. He sees that the flame, "studiously kindled" some time since, "is now greatly checked," and he hopes to help remove the misunderstanding which has caused so much bitterness and animosity. "First," he says, "I will set down in as plain and artless a manner as I can, according to the best light I have, the real state of those affairs which have occasioned these misunderstandings," by which he means the occurrences in America. He had received many letters from America, especially from New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and he considers himself prepared to deliver the plain facts. As early as 1737, when his brother Charles visited New England, the spirit of independence was evident there, and with the increase in wealth and population, the idea of independence had grown. Among the ways of getting wealth was that of smuggling, in which "the celebrated Mr. Hancock" was of the most successful. When the English officers attempted to suppress this illegal practice, they were laughed to scorn, "for the people were too good patriots to condemn their countrymen." It was not, however, until the American leaders had nothing to fear from Canada and had a sufficient number of friends in England that they "began to entertain their higher designs." Then follows a summary of events in America, Boston, Long Island, New York. The English were everywhere driving rebels before them "like a flock of sheep," he thinks. "They will not fight." The tide had turned since the King had called a general fast in England.

There is not "the very shadow of liberty left "in the colonies," he continues. "There is no liberty of the press. A man may more safely print

against the Church in Italy and Spain than publish a title against the Congress in New England or Pennsylvania. There is no religious liberty. What minister is permitted to follow his own conscience in the execution of his office? to put man in mind to be 'subject to principalities and powers?' to 'fear God and honour the King?' Who is suffered (whatever his conscience may dictate) to 'pray for the king, and all that are in authority?' There is no civil liberty. No man hath any security. . . ." "Wherever these hawkers for liberty govern, there is vilest slavery." Then addressing his own Methodists he says, "Do any of you blaspheme God or the King? None of you, I trust, who are in connection with me. I would no more continue in fellowship with those who continued in such practices, than with whoremongers, or Sabbath breakers, or thieves, or drunkards, or common swearers."¹⁶

The last two political utterances of Wesley appeared in 1778. The one entitled *A Serious Address to the People of England, with regard to the Status of the Nation*¹⁷ is probably the least important of his political leaflets. He defends the moral character of the nation against the critics of gloom and, at the same time, calls the English nation to God lest He be avenged on such a nation. *A Compassionate Address to the Inhabitants of Ireland*¹⁸ assures the Irish that England is not in as bad shape as she appears. Having conversed with some persons who had come to Cork from Philadelphia, he reports as good authority their account that a pestilential fever was wiping out Washington's army at a rate of thirty, forty, sometimes fifty thousand men a day! In two months about fifteen hundred had deserted to General Howe and "many were inclined to believe he had not more than five thousand effective men left." "Never fright yourself, therefore," says Wesley, "General Washington's huge army has melted away like snow in harvest." On the other hand, Howe's men are referred to as "weatherbeaten" men who will "give a good account" of themselves. Nor is there any danger from the French. Spain and Portugal are not to be feared. "Scriptural religion," he says, "is continually increasing in every part of the kingdom; as an impartial observer cannot but see, whether he turn east, west, north, or south. Now I know no instance in all history, from the earliest ages to this day, of the Governor of the world delivering up a kingdom to destruction, while religion was increasing in it."¹⁹

It is clear from our study of the pamphlets that Wesley was a thinker of an instinctive Tory frame of mind. The King and the government had divine sanction; it is the obligation of the citizen to honour the king and render him his due as loyal subjects. Wesley is suspicious of the sin of disobedience in a too vocative expression of individual opinion, in too

strong a championship of freedom in personal viewpoint. A man's freedom after all is not by virtue of his human nature, merely; it is from God. Insubordination and freedom are incompatible principles. McConnell says, "He could not endure the notion, and especially the fact of insubordination, though he, himself, as we have occasion to see, always took it on himself to say how far he would obey his superiors, the bishops. He obeyed the bishops, in so far as he thought they were godly, which usually meant in so far as they approved the views of John Wesley."²⁰

Wesley did not understand the true American feeling and often accepted as good authority gross misrepresentation of fact both as to the causes of the struggle and the situation among the colonists or their army.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the struggle, Wesley came to realize that he was mistaken. The historical providence of God turned out to be different from Wesley's prejudiced view.

In his letter to "Our Brethren in America," dated September 10, 1784, at Bristol in which he gives his reasons for personally ordaining Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, he closes with the statement that the new liberty of the Americans was "strangely made" by God.

It is well to quote here the famous passage in the letter: "As our American brethren are totally disentangled both from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free."²¹

On the whole, the political impact of John Wesley was toward social stability, at the same time fearlessly challenging injustice and evil as incompatible with an enduring society. Playing such a role, the influential leader of the movement made a large contribution to "the saving of England from the contagion of French revolutionary ideas."²²

John Wesley was slow to perceive the justice of the American cause and the aspiration of its leaders for freedom. Yet freedom is basic in the nature of true Englishmen. At long last he did sense the vision which the colonists had seen in it and the strange working of God in history. To discern and comprehend Providence and the Hand of God in "the wave of the future" in that historic context turned out to be timely wisdom and insight. The forming of the Methodist Episcopal Church had

Wesley's blessing; and, obviously, it soon witnessed to the blessing of Almighty God.

NOTES

1. "Observations on Liberty," page 303, *Works*, VI.
2. *John Wesley's Letters*, Vol. VI, pp. 155-164.
3. *Letters*, VI, 179-180.
4. *Journal*, (Everyman Ed., 1906), pp. 60-61.
5. McConnell, *John Wesley*, p. 261.
6. *Gentlemen's Magazine*, 1785. p. 932.
7. *Works*, VI, 251.
8. *Works*, VI, 300-321.
9. *Works*, VI, 302.
10. *Works*, VI, 319.
11. *Works*, VI, 320.
12. op. cit., VI, 321.
13. op. cit., VI, 322.
14. *Works*, VI, 327.
15. op. cit., VI, 328-342.
16. *Works*, VI, 335.
17. op. cit., VI, 336-342.
18. op. cit., VI, 342-345.
19. *Works*, VI, 345.
20. McConnell, *John Wesley*, p. 261.
21. *History of American Methodism*, Vol. I., p. 203.
22. A phrase of Louis Cazamian, distinguished French scholar in English life and letters, in his *A History of English Literature*, (MacMillan, N.Y., 1930), p. 956.

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EARLY AMERICAN METHODISM:

THE UNIQUE CAREER OF A PIONEER

text and sketches

by

Lloyd E. Griscom

Joseph Toy (1748-1826) pursued a significant career by founding the first Methodist Societies in New Jersey, several years before the emergence of Methodism as a full-fledged Church. By a quirk of circumstance, he moved on from New Jersey to Maryland and was on the scene when the Church was born there in 1784.

By profession, he was a teacher for some thirty years, closing that career with an extensive stint in the first school sponsored by the new Church—Cokesbury College—where he undoubtedly rang the historic Cokesbury bell many times.

At 49 years of age, he launched upon a new career as an ordained Methodist preacher and rode the trails of the early Church for almost thirty years.

Such, in brief, was the unique career of an American-born Methodist pioneer, whose story—like that of many another pioneer preacher—has been largely obscured by the tides of time.

Joseph Toy, mentioned in some records under the full name Christian Joseph Toy, was born on April 24, 1748, on the *Toy Plantation* of some 800 acres—site of the present town of Palmyra, New Jersey. The house in which he grew up still stands in that town, facing the Delaware River and shaded by giant sycamores. He was the fifth child of Elias and Elizabeth (Wood) Toy.

As a teen-ager, he was sent, in winter seasons, to a boarding school at Burlington—the “Province-Town of West New Jersey” at the time—where he studied to become a schoolmaster and began to teach nearby.

Along the way he met Frances Dallam, the daughter of Richard Dallam of Maryland. The course of true love must have run smoothly, for these two were married on May 20, 1770.

In 1770, likewise, Toy heard a sermon in the Burlington market-house by British-born Captain Thomas Webb—complete with his colorful red coat, green eye-patch, and regimental sword—on the Methodist doctrine of Justification by Faith.

Toy, nominally a Swedish Lutheran of the Augsburg Confession, was impressed by the Methodist message. The upshot of this was a request by Captain Webb that the young American form a Methodist Class in Burlington which Toy did on December 14, 1770. It was the first such Class in New Jersey.

In 1771, Toy's teaching took him to Trenton, N.J., where he immediately sponsored a Methodist Society which met in the new Toy home there.

When Francis Asbury came on the scene from England in 1771, he found these evidences of Toy's work in New Jersey. Perhaps similarity of age as well as interests brought these two together: Asbury at the time was 26; Toy was 23.

Asbury preached at Burlington in 1771, laid the cornerstone for a meeting-house at Trenton in 1773, and in the same year induced Toy to serve as trustee for the early Methodist Society at New Mills (Pemberton) N.J.

Over the years such redoubtable leaders as Embury, Strawbridge, Pilmoor, Boardman, Rankin, Shadford, John Early, John King, and Robert Williams arrived from England and Ireland to carry the message of Methodism across the Middle Colonies and into the South; several of these had been sent directly by John Wesley as missionaries to the new world.

Francis Asbury, however, had benefit of a letter from Wesley, setting him somewhat apart to act as “Assistant in America.”

A Conference at Philadelphia in 1773 heard that Methodist membership for the colonies totaled 1,160 (Virginia 100, New York 180, Pennsylvania 180, New Jersey 200, and Maryland 500). Joseph Toy was responsible for quite a number of the New Jersey converts, sharing such honors with Captain Webb and with Joseph Pilmoor, who evangelized near Gloucester, N.J., while traveling as a missionary.

Toy was now occasionally preaching. Asbury in 1773 noted in his journal: “I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Toy preach with great sensibility.” This was in Philadelphia, probably at old St. George's.

Methodism in this period was a set of Societies following a methodical pattern of worship, gradually acquiring a few meeting places and lay preachers; but it was not a full-scale Church. Its activities were looked upon as oddities cropping up in a wing of the Church of England—for Methodists were tied to that Church through the medium of John Wesley and looked to it for the sacraments.

In the fold of the English Church, the Methodists were considered to be unorthodox sheep, black sheep even, but not yet straying ones.

The relationship to the Church of England was exemplified in the early life of Joseph Toy, who often attended its services. One of his cousins was theologian William White of that Church, a Philadelphian who later became a Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The onset of the Revolutionary War brought dire changes. The Church of England found itself in sorry straits in America, with its doors closing rapidly—and almost shorn of its shepherds, for some of its clergy were jailed, and many others returned post-haste to England.

Methodism, likewise, as a result of its British-born leadership, came under suspicion. Toy's old mentor, Captain Webb, was in custody but was later released to return to England. The missionaries sent out by Wesley had already returned to their homeland—except for Asbury who elected to remain, isolated for a time in Delaware, while the war raged. John Wesley's *Calm Address to the American Colonies* had anything but a calming effect.

All of these events left the Methodist Societies in America heavily dependent upon their American pioneer preachers; these lay preachers responded mightily to the challenge of the times.

Meanwhile, Joseph and Frances Toy and their growing family moved from New Jersey to Abingdon, Maryland, locating near the wife's former home. Toy founded a Methodist Society there in 1779.

One of his important works at this time was the conversion of his father-in-law, Colonel Richard Dallam. An officer in the American Army, Colonel Dallam turned from lukewarm Deism to an ardent Methodist. In later years his plantation of 600 acres became a periodic haven for Francis Asbury amidst Asbury's many travels.

At the close of the war, the Church of England was obviously unable to function properly under that name in the United States—even though tempers in this country had cooled considerably.

Numerous appeals were forwarded by Methodists to spiritual leader John Wesley for ordination of American preachers and the institution of a Methodist Church where baptisms, weddings, funerals, and Holy Communion could be suitably administered.

In 1784, bowing to the requests, 81-year-old John Wesley consecrated Dr. Thomas Coke and sent him to the United States to ordain Asbury; the two were to become equal "Superintendents" and to call a Conference of American Methodist preachers.

This was the famous "Christmas Conference" of 1784 in Baltimore, at which the Methodist Episcopal Church was born. The Americans elected Coke and Asbury as Bishops, and numerous pastors were ordained from the ranks of the former lay preachers.

Prior to the Conference, Colonel Dallam and Joseph Toy met Dr. Coke who was escorted to nearby Abingdon where Coke concurred with an earlier decision by Asbury on the site for a Methodist school. This was to be Cokesbury College; so named by American preachers to honor the two leaders. Funds were subscribed by the Conference and, subsequently, by many laymen. The cornerstone of the college was laid by Bishop Asbury on June 5, 1785.

Expressive were the prayers, meanwhile, as Methodists knelt in their meeting-houses and other improvised places of worship for the Sacrament of Holy Communion. For many Americans it was the first Communion in many years; for many others it was the first Communion ever. Well may they have sung Charles Wesley's words:

*Come, sinners, to the gospel feast;
Let every soul be Jesus' guest;
Ye need not one be left behind,
For God hath bidden all mankind.
Sent by my Lord, on you I call;
The invitation is to all;
Come all the world! come, sinner, thou!
All things in Christ are ready now.*



Joseph Toy; he rode the trails of the early Church.

Soon after the beginnings of Cokesbury College, Joseph Toy was named Instructor in English Literature and Mathematics for the college. In 1787, a Methodist Conference convened there, and twelve hungry preachers bulged the walls of Toy's house and thrived on Frances Toy's cooking.

In 1795, Cokesbury College burned to the ground. Toy moved with the students to a substitute building in Baltimore. A year later this likewise was burned, in 1796; and the Methodists gave up for a time their costly educational effort.

In 1797, Asbury ordained Joseph Toy who took up the itinerant life of a preacher. His many charges included such towns as Frederick and Calvert and ranged far afield to such points as Norfolk and Severn, Virginia.

He was highly regarded by Asbury, who wrote in 1801: "If I was to advise, it would be for brother Toy to take charge of the Point (Fells Point, Md.) and he can attend to the building. He knows how things ought to be done. God has honored him. . . ."

Later, Asbury was again writing: "Great times in Calvert, where brother Toy does wonders. . . ."

Joseph Toy and his family were seemingly a little better off, at least in the way of horseflesh, than some of the preachers who had trouble making ends meet on their salary of "\$64 a year, and no more." Asbury more than once sent circuit riders, when their mounts were lamed, to "borrow a horse from Joseph Toy."

In the early Methodist Episcopal Church the Sacrament of Holy Communion was indeed highly regarded; but superfluous apparel was not: "Let no person who is not a member be admitted without a Sacrament ticket . . . and give no tickets to any that wear enormous bonnets, ruffles, or rings." So said the Rules.

Similar tickets were required for Methodist Love Feasts, and early church history tells of a Love Feast held in a barn and interrupted by gate crashers, who failed loudly at the gate; but "one young man forced his way through a hole at the end of the barn," only to be "put out through the same hole he came in!"

It was in this early Methodist world of primitive preaching places and of Wesleyan singing and liturgy that Joseph Toy made his way. Through it all, he remained an unassuming, faithful witness.

In 1819 he retired at age 70, his sight failing, but continued as a substitute. He became ill while preaching in his 77th year. Carried from the pulpit, Joseph Toy died on January 26, 1826.

Back in New Jersey, his influence was still felt. In the 1800's a kinsman, Isaiah Toy, became a Trustee of Methodist churches in Cin-

naminson in 1812, Moorestown in 1815, and founded a Sunday School on the native Toy soil of Palmyra in 1840 and later established a Church there in 1853.

In Maryland and Virginia, several of Joseph Toy's descendants became educators. In the Methodist Church at large, education became a major concern long after the early effort at Cokesbury College. More than 150 institutions of learning are Methodist-related today in addition to thousands of local parish church schools.

By the time of Bishop Asbury's death in 1816, the number of Methodists in America had jumped to some 200,000; and the Church was continuing to spread and grow, in Wesley's words, "like a green bay tree."

There was every reason for this Church to grow in America; for it was in its beginnings a Church for Americans, born on the soil of the newly-founded United States, and led out of the hard travail of a struggle for freedom by Bishop Asbury and the American pioneer preachers.

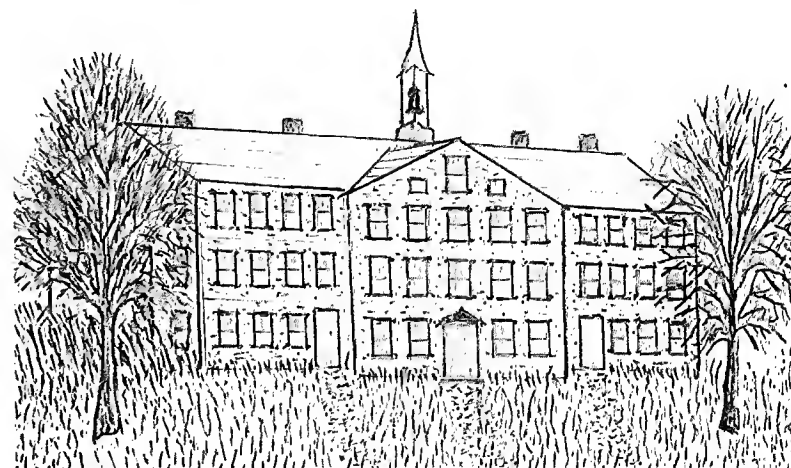
SOURCES

Cyclopedia of Methodism—Simpson pp. 147 & 236.

Genealogy of the Toy family (in possession of Jane Toy Coolidge, a direct descendant of Joseph Toy, presently residing at Medford Leas, Medford, N.J.)

Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury (principal references are Bishop Asbury to George Roberts August 12, 1801, and Bishop Asbury to Bishop Whatcoat August 18, 1802)

Methodist Magazine, year 1826 (pg. 438)



Cokesbury College, lost to fire in 1795. Only the bell was saved.

THE 1844 SHOWDOWN OVER SLAVERY:

THE CHURCH DIVIDES

by
Robert J. Williams

The General Conferences in the decades preceding the Civil War vividly illustrated the conservatism of many Northern Methodists, including those from New Jersey on the issue of slavery. From 1824 until 1836, the General Conference had been silent on slavery. From 1836 until 1864, the abolitionists sought to change the law of the church and thereby forbid slaveholders from remaining as members of local churches. After the formation of the New Jersey Conference in 1836, it is possible to document the voting of the New Jersey delegations at the General Conferences and the actions of the Conference itself. The record is consistent—New Jersey Methodists defended the status quo and were unwilling to change the law of the church. Their willingness to permit slaveholders to remain as church members represented something of a middle ground between the abolitionists and those who defended slavery as a moral good. Expressing their opposition to slavery through colonization but sanctioning slavery through defense of slave-holding church members, New Jersey Methodists sought a conservative *via media*. They wanted to be able to condemn slavery without offending slaveholders, other New Jersey citizens, or Methodists in the southern states. Church-wide harmony and ecclesiastical peace appeared at times to be higher priorities than ridding the church of the taint of slavery. Permitting slavery to remain in the church was a more congenial accommodation to the South than writing principle into church law. New Jersey soil was not conducive for producing in any group, including church people, a willingness to confront injustices suffered by blacks. A commitment to reform failed to blossom in such an environment.

THE SILENCE IS BROKEN

Two laws essentially governed church policy on slavery when abolitionist agitation brought the question to center stage again in 1836. The first was the General Rule, passed in 1789, which stated that those who wished to be members of the societies would continue to give evidence of their sincerity “by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every

kind; especially that which is most generally practiced: Such as . . . The buying or selling of men, women, or children, with an intention to enslave them.”¹ Note that the slave trade was forbidden, but not slaveholding. A two-thirds vote of the General Conference and a majority of Annual Conferences had to concur for a General Rule to be altered. This rule would remain unchanged until 1864.

The second statement on slavery appeared in what was commonly called the Chapter or Section on Slavery in the *Discipline*. This Chapter had been added to help clarify the church’s platform. It went through numerous revisions in wording until 1820. Since that year it read:

Ques. What shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?

Ans. 1. We declare that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery; therefore no slave holder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter, where the laws of the State in which he lives will admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom.

2. When any travelling preacher becomes an owner of a slave or slaves, by any means, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our church, unless he execute, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the state in which he lives.²

These rules prevented slaveholders from acting as church officials and as ordained clergy in those states that permitted emancipation. In those states that did not, none of these restrictions had any force.

From 1824 until 1836, the Church had maintained its silence on slavery, awaiting the increased agitation of the abolitionists. Donald Mathews articulated a cogent summary of the Methodist policy in the early 1830’s:

By 1832 Methodists had relegated the slavery issue to the periphery of moral and institutional concern. Church leaders wished neither to condemn nor explicitly to condone Negro servitude, partially because of previous experiences with antislavery preaching and partially because of their dedication to the American Colonization Society and the missions to the slaves.³

The General Conference of 1836 tried, without success, to keep the question of slavery out of its deliberations, but silence was no longer a luxury to be enjoyed by the delegates. All matters were referred to the Committee on Slavery which deemed it “improper” to “agitate” on the subject in the General Conference. Three groups began to take shape that would be found at successive Conferences. There were the radical abolitionists, who would lose many of their number in 1843 to the Wesleyan Methodists. A second position was that of the Southern conservatives, who wanted no agitation against slavery, and who left the Methodist Episcopal Church in the great division of 1844. The third

group was the Northern moderates, who saw slavery as morally wrong but sought to maintain peace between the extreme factions. Relative strengths of the three groups would be altered in successive General Conferences, but the lines had been drawn. In 1836, the strength of the anti-abolitionist forces, an alliance between conservatives and moderates, was revealed in its repudiation of the abolitionist activity of two delegates and the disclaimer of any "right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slaveholding states of the union."⁴

In 1839, New Jersey Methodists started a pattern of refusing to support any change in either the General Rule of the Chapter on Slavery, with the refusal to concur in a memorial from the New England Conference which requested the outlawing of slaveholding by church members. A year later, the same resolutions from New England were presented again with the same result: Seventy-five voted against concurrence and none voted in favor.⁵ There was no sentiment among Methodist preachers in New Jersey to alienate their anti-abolitionist neighbors or the southern wing of the church.

The General Conference which convened in Baltimore on May 1, 1840,⁶ made every effort to avoid any discussion of slavery in spite of petitions from 10,000 abolitionists. The Conference silenced the anti-slavery forces by accepting the report of the Committee on Slavery. It concluded that the conferences "should closely adhere to the language of the *Discipline* as it now stands."⁷ The southern conservatives, supported by the northern moderates, were in complete control. "Possibly the most symbolic repudiation of abolitionism, however, was the conference's recommendation of the organization most abused by the radical anti-slavery men, the American Colonization Society. The abolitionists, it seemed, were being crushed on every hand."⁸

It is difficult to discern the motivations of delegates from voting records alone, but it seems reasonable to infer that New Jersey Methodists wanted to avoid a division of the church and found the agitation of New England abolitionists unacceptable. The task of those who sought harmony has been described with profound insight by Donald Mathews.

The conservatives were a *via media* in a conflict over the source of responsibility. Abolitionists were responsible to the principles of human freedom. Southerners were responsible to their congregations as good Protestants, to the good order of society as decent citizens, and to the Mission to the Slaves as ministers of the Gospel. Conservatives were responsible to a decent, well-ordered society and the institutional, historical, and moral integrity of the Church. Such integrity forbade

social and rhetorical recklessness in both the North and the South. Although increasingly estranged from Southern proslavery apologists, the conservatives still managed to be true to their primary concern—Methodist unity. In their desire to maintain a national institution, however, they had failed to keep the Church free of implication with the slavery they professed to abhor.⁹

Those whom Mathews labeled "conservative," I have labeled "northern moderates." Either label can fit New Jersey Methodists.

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1844

In preparation for the General Conference of 1844, the New Jersey Conference again voted to oppose any change in the General Rule on slavery. A memorial was received this time from the Genesee Conference, and quite predictable, the Conference voted non-concurrence.¹⁰ Four years had not altered the opinions of the Methodist clergy in New Jersey on removing slaveholders from the church, but other issues would come before the General Conference that would reveal a split in the delegation over its willingness to accommodate the southern interests.

The delegates from New Jersey who gathered in New York on May 1, 1844, were Isaac Winner, John S. Porter, John K. Shaw, Thomas Neal, Thomas Sovereign, with John McClintock as reserve. Most members of the delegation were pastors or presiding elders. Winner, Porter, and Shaw had been delegates to the Conference of 1840, but while the membership of the two Conferences was similar, this assembly would be much different.

The Northern conservatives were fed up with concessions to the South, and the abolitionists were ready to follow the lead of their erstwhile nemeses in the fight against slavery's influence on Methodism. Although the Southern delegates had not changed their goals, they were far more aggressive than at Baltimore a quadrennium earlier. Apparently encouraged by the demands of their politicians for extension of slavery and the admission of Texas, Southern Methodists were ready to fight against the proposed repeal of the Few resolution, the exclusion of slaveholders from high office, or any attempt to censure Bishop James O. Andrew for becoming a master. In fact, Southern delegates were prepared to resist any General Conference action which would in any way make the Methodist Episcopal Church appear to be even slightly concerned over the existence of slavery.¹¹

Three clashes over issues related to blacks occurred before the main event involving Bishop Andrew. Round one was over alteration of the General Rule. The New Jersey delegation stayed solidly with the South in opposing both the Genesee and New York Conference resolutions.¹² The Genesee resolution would have prohibited slave-holding and the

New York resolution was largely technical in nature, calling for the substitution of the word "and" for "or" in the phrase "buying or selling of men, women, and children."¹³

Round two centered on the vote to rescind the Few resolution of 1840 which forbade the testimony of black church members in states where the law did not allow such testimony in civil hearings. The Few resolution was rescinded by a vote of 115-40, with all New Jersey delegates voting with the majority.¹⁴ This was a complete turnaround from the vote four years before and demonstrated that there were limits to how far northern delegates would go to pacify southern prejudices.

Round three was over the appeal of Francis A. Harding of the Baltimore Conference. Here, the New Jersey delegation split. Harding had been "deprived of ministerial character" by his conference because he had refused to emancipate the slaves he had received through marriage. His appeal sought to have the General Conference reverse the decision of the Baltimore Conference. After three days of heated debate, the motion to reverse the decision of the Baltimore Conference was lost by a vote of 117-56.¹⁵ The Southerners had lost an important vote. The moderates were now in control and were voting against the interests of the South and voting against slavery. The reversal on black testimony in church trials and support of the Baltimore Conference demonstrated a decisive shift of opinion. The easy truce with slavery was slowly being repudiated.

The New Jersey delegation manifested this shifting of opinion. On the Harding appeal, the delegation split. Winner, Porter, and Shaw voted to sustain the Baltimore Conference censure of Harding along with most of the northern delegates. Neal and Sovereign voted to reverse the decision along with the southern delegates and thereby sanction the holding of slaves by Harding and, by implication, other Methodists as well. The affirmative vote was composed of the Southern bloc and nine delegates from border states, two of whom were from New Jersey.¹⁶ The delegation had now established a pattern that would be maintained throughout the Conference. Sovereign and Neal would consistently vote with the Southern bloc. It should be noted that while the moderates were stiffening in their opposition to slavery, they stopped short of tampering with those parts of the *Discipline* governing slavery.

These preliminary rounds only increased the tension in preparation for the main event, the case of Bishop Andrew's ownership of slaves. The Conference would be vexed for days. He had been bequeathed two slaves whom he could not free as a resident of Georgia. One slave was a

girl who did not want to leave and the other was a boy who would be sent North as soon as he was old enough. The Bishop married a second time, to a woman who was a slave-owner. The Bishop, by a deed of trust, made his wife the owner, removing himself from any association as their master. But this did not satisfy the abolitionists; the episcopacy was to be purged of any taint of slavery. The southerners would not budge in their defense of Bishop Andrew and let him proceed with his desire to resign.¹⁷

After days of debate, evidently without significant contributions from New Jersey delegates, James B. Finley of Ohio placed a substitute motion on the floor that Bishop Andrew "desist" from exercising the episcopal office as long as he remained a slaveholder. This replaced the motion that Bishop Andrew should resign. A motion to limit debate fell short of the needed two-thirds majority by a vote of 98-80, with Isaac Winner voting to limit debate along with the bulk of the northern delegates. Porter, Shaw, Neal, and Sovereign voted with the South to let the debate continue.¹⁸

The Bishops futilely sought a compromise. They urged that a decision be postponed until 1848. Episcopal visitations could be arranged in such a way as to cause no offense to the northern conferences who would object to a slaveholding bishop serving as the presiding officer. The abolitionists were not satisfied, and Nathan Bangs moved that it be tabled. The motion prevailed, 95-84, and the proposal was effectively defeated. The northerners were unwilling to accept this compromise so, along with Winner and Shaw, they voted to table. Voting against the motion to table and thereby indicating support for the compromise were the southern delegates and Porter, Neal, and Sovereign from New Jersey.¹⁹

At last the Conference approved the Finley substitute on June 1 by a vote of 110-68. Bishop Andrew was to desist from the exercise of his office. The New Jersey delegates split in what had become a predictable pattern: Winner, Shaw, and Porter voted "yes" while Neal and Sovereign voted "no."²⁰ The key vote had been taken and the division of the church appeared to be inevitable.

A minority protest to General Conference was forthcoming from those who opposed the Finley substitute. Those who made formal protest against degrading Bishop Andrew by requiring him to desist from his labors included only nine northern delegates, two of whom were New Jerseyans: Neal and Sovereign.²¹

While Neal and Sovereign consistently supported the interests of the South, the support of Isaac Winner for the North did not go un-

recognized. William A. Smith of Virginia, in debating the possibility of assigning Bishop Andrew only to those conferences that would accept him, said:

Will the Philadelphia and New Jersey Conferences refuse the services of Bishop Andrew, or secede? Indeed, sir, no man will affirm this. Not even the zeal of brother Winner from New Jersey betrayed him into a hint of this sort.²²

The General Conference could not adjourn until some plan to divide the Church could be devised. On June 8, a series of resolutions were adopted in response to the Report of the Committee of Nine. These resolutions would (1) agree to a "peaceable division of the Church," (2) provide that ministers could choose between the two Churches without blame, (3) divide the resources of the Book Concern and Charter Fund. The division would also require a vote of the Annual Conferences due to certain restrictive provisions in the Constitution of the denomination. All were passed by an overwhelming majority. The New Jersey delegates voted affirmatively for all of these resolutions for which there was a roll-call vote, except for Shaw who voted "no" on the first resolution only.²³

Annual Conference authorization was needed to suspend the Constitution to allow for dividing the resources of the Book Concern. The Conferences that met soon after the General Conference generally approved the plan, but the Conferences that met later, on the whole, did not. As the debate took shape over the year, there occurred a gradual shifting of opinion. The Philadelphia and New Jersey Conferences, meeting the following winter, voted overwhelmingly against the necessary suspension of the Constitution. The New Jersey Conference voted 2 in favor and 110 against it. The only two yes votes, recorded in the handwritten *Journal*, were Thomas Sovereign and Bromwell Andrew.²⁴ The Conference was against the plan that sought a "peaceable" division of the Church, and even two of the delegates who voted in favor of the plan at General Conference, Porter and Neal, opposed it when they voted almost a year later. Accommodation with the southern wing of the church was not popular. The limits of compromise had been reached.

Why did the delegates from New Jersey vote as they did? Obviously, the delegates' motivations for voting as they did are subject to much conjecture. Thomas Neal and Thomas Sovereign voted to defend Harding's right and Bishop Andrew's right to own slaves. How much were they influenced by the pro-South sentiment in New Jersey? Northern New Jersey businesses relied on southern markets for their goods, most

notably shoes, and southwestern Jersey had social contacts across the Delaware River with the State of Delaware. At the start of the Civil War, the state Legislature was very much in sympathy with the Southern cause. The State never outright abolished slavery or provided much support for anti-slavery societies.

Thomas Neal may have been influenced by his ancestral roots in a slaveholding state. He was born in Maryland and served initially in the southern portions of the Philadelphia Conference, primarily in Delaware and Maryland. He had been a delegate to the General Conferences of 1824, 1828, 1832, and 1844. He took supernumerary status in 1845.²⁵ The early years in Thomas Sovereign's life fail to provide any illumination for his southern orientation. Born in Simcoe, Upper Canada, his successful career included service as presiding elder and temperance agent. Even though he voted for the right to own slaves, after division came, he was willing to serve as Chaplain of the Fifth New Jersey Regiment of Volunteers during the Civil War and in 1865 became Financial Agent for the Sanitary Commission. His memoir may provide a clue to his cautious nature. He may have simply sought peace in the Church by defending the status quo. The memoir lauded his qualities:

The distinguished positions he held he adorned by his faithfulness and devotion—paternal as pastor, assiduous as agent, judicious and loyal as a General Conference delegate, attentive and safe as presiding elder, and patriotic and self-sacrificing as an army chaplain.²⁶

Winner, Shaw, and Porter voted as northern moderates who sought a *via media* between the southern conservatives and the New England abolitionists, many of whom had left the Church a year before. The status quo was to be preserved as they refused to make any changes in the *Discipline* concerning slavery, but overt endorsement of slavery by letting Harding own slaves and permitting a Bishop to be involved with slavery would not be tolerated. It would certainly appear that the Harding and Andrew votes indicate that these delegates would not tolerate such an easy approval of slavery. Unfortunately, the only person from New Jersey who has provided anti-slavery testimony was the reserve delegate John McClintock. He indicated in a letter to the Rev. Stephen Olin, President of Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, that compromise with the South was impossible.

The south will go off. The Virginia part of the Baltimore Conference will mostly go with the South: Maryland and Delaware will remain with the North. One good result will follow: the anti-slavery spirit will form in Maryland and perhaps slavery

may soon be abolished there. God grant it. If I see any danger of a compromise, I must write and speak against it. I shall burst if I don't, as Dr. Arnold used to say. It would be far better to let Maryland and Virginia go, and to keep the whole North united on an honest anti-slavery basis,—the true basis for Northern people. I am more and more disposed to believe, that if the curse of slavery is ever removed from us, it must be by other people than slaveholders: and I do not intend to be backward there—after enlightening the people of these parts on the subject. That 250,000 slaveholders should rule this great empire is a thing not to be endured—and it can't be endured much longer.²⁷

In 1847, McClintock wrote to the *Christian Advocate*:

To avoid all misconception, the proposition which I offer may be thus expressed: It is the duty of the Christian Church in the United States to direct its influence as a Church, for the extirpation of American slavery.²⁸

Such anti-slavery zeal may have influenced his colleagues at the General Conference, but it is unlikely that he had significant influence on the New Jersey Conference as a whole, for he was on the faculty at Dickinson College during these years.

While it would appear that slavery was the issue at hand, it has been suggested that questions of church government were uppermost in the delegates' minds at the General Conference of 1844. Donald Mathews has argued the contrary, insisting that the issue of slavery was pivotal at the Conference. He has claimed that "slavery and slaveholders were much more important to Southerners than 'constitutionality.' The denial that slavery divided the Church is simply unsupported by evidence."²⁹ But Gerald Moede wrote:

... it appears that the slaveholding issue was the fundamental question leading to the division of the church in 1844. But in reality the slavery issue was only a sounding board, or an occasion, rather than the cause of the difficulty. The deeper, basic issue ... was a difference in governmental philosophy.³⁰

This difference in governmental philosophy was over the relative powers and relationship between the episcopacy and the General Conference. The Northerners believed that the General Conference was the supreme power in the church and could force a slaveholding bishop from office. The Southerners held that there was a co-ordinate or equal relationship between the episcopacy and the General Conference, and they were willing to divide the church over that principle. The role of this question of government should not be lightly dismissed as an unimportant factor in the division of the church. However, the opinion that the General Conference had the power to censure a Bishop and force him to desist from exercising his office is not the same as selecting that issue over

which the Conference would be willing to exercise that power. In fact, it seems to this writer that only over an issue as important as slavery would the northern delegates be willing to exercise such grave and significant prerogatives. The Southerners, on the other hand, finding it impossible to defend slavery on moral grounds, had to resort to the "smokescreen" of appealing to the inability of the Conference to exercise such sweeping powers. Unfortunately, the voting record of the New Jersey delegates does little to resolve the debate over which issues were truly determinative at the General Conferences of 1844.

The reaction of the New Jersey Conference as a whole can be portrayed around three actions. First, as noted above, the Conference opposed any change in the *Discipline* and thus sought to maintain the status quo. Second, it refused to divide the Book Concern and demonstrated an unwillingness to accommodate the South on every issue. Third, it reacted to the voting records of its delegates in the subsequent election of delegates for the General Conference of 1848. Indicating disapproval of close identification with the South, the Conference did not return those delegates who voted with the South in 1844 to the General Conference of 1848. Thomas Neal retired in 1845 and was not in consideration for selection to the next quadrennial assembly. Thomas Sovereign remained a leader of the Conference by serving as presiding elder from 1848 until 1856, yet he was never again elected to a General Conference. John S. Porter, who usually voted with the northern moderates but supported the compromise that would have permitted Bishop Andrew to function in selected conferences, was returned to General Conference only as a reserve delegate. Isaac Winner and John Knox Shaw, both of whom consistently voted with the northern delegates, were returned in 1848. Thomas Sovereign was singled out as the only member of the 1844 delegation never to be elected again. It appears that through such selection, the Conference was registering its disapproval of voting with the southern interests. There were limits on accommodating the South.

THE AFTERMATH OF DIVISION

The General Conference of 1848 was the first to meet without the southern conferences represented, leaving the northern and western delegates in control. The absence of the Southerners provided the abolitionists new encouragement to seek the necessary changes in the *Discipline* to outlaw slavery from the church. This and the next four Conferences would be agitated by this issue with the New Jersey delegations consistently opposed to any change in the language of the *Discipline*.

The debate over the regulations governing slaveholders was becoming more bitter by the General Conference in Indianapolis in 1856. Samuel Y. Monroe, presiding elder of the Bridgeton District of the New Jersey Conference, found no need to change any of the legislation. "His conclusions were, that loyalty to Christ, loyalty to the Church, and noninterference with the political issues of the day, all combined to forbid any such legislation as was now contemplated."³¹ The first resolution of the majority report of the Committee on Slavery was passed by a vote of 122-96, falling short of the needed two-thirds majority to change the General Rule on Slavery. The New Jersey delegation continued unanimous in its opposition to such a change.³²

At last the Committee on Slavery at the General Conference of 1860 supported the changes advocated by the abolitionists. Those opposed to the proposed changes formulated a Minority Report. The chairman of this minority was John S. Porter, presiding elder of the Rahway District, Newark Conference; and one of its leading spokesmen was Samuel Y. Monroe, pastor of the Third Street Church in Camden, New Jersey Conference. On May 29, the resolution to change the General Rule to forbid slaveholding failed to gain the necessary two-thirds majority. The vote was 138-74 with all delegates from New Jersey voting against the resolution.³³

Before the vote was taken on changing the Chapter on Slavery, delegates from New Jersey sought a compromise that would accommodate both anti-slavery and anti-abolitionist sentiments. The first effort at compromise was led by George Hughes of the New Jersey Conference, who would later gain fame as a writer and publisher of holiness materials. He moved the following:

Whereas a change of such magnitude as is now proposed should not be made without the sanction of the laity as well as the ministry; therefore,
Resolved, That the chapter proposed shall be first submitted by the Bishops to the Annual Conferences, and by the Presiding Elders to the Quarterly Conferences in their respective districts, and if it received the vote of three-fourths of the members of said Conferences it shall take effect.³⁴

This effort to slow down any change failed 61-150 with all New Jersey delegates voting in the affirmative. Blatantly, Hughes found referral an attractive strategy for evading a decision right away. However, the General Conference was unwilling to tolerate complicity with slavery any longer. The abolitionists knew they had majority support in spite of the opposition from the border conferences.

After this first attempt failed, Samuel Y. Monroe, on behalf of himself and nineteen others, advocated that the language of the new

chapter should be declared advisory in tone. People and clergy were to be admonished to free themselves from any association with slavery, but this should take the form of a resolution and not require change in the *Discipline*. In spite of full support from the New Jersey delegations and significant support from the border conferences of Baltimore and Philadelphia, the following resolution lost 81-132, because the anti-slavery men were not satisfied that it was sufficiently condemnatory of slavery:

Resolved, That we believe that the buying, selling, or holding of human beings to be used as chattels is contrary to the laws of God and nature, inconsistent with the Golden Rule, and with the Rule in our Discipline which requires all who desire to remain among us to "do no harm, and to avoid evil of every kind," we, therefore, affectionately admonish all our preachers and people to keep themselves pure from this great evil, and to seek its extirpation by all lawful and Christian means.³⁵

Finally, on May 31, the vote was taken to amend the Chapter on Slavery to forbid, without equivocation, slaveholding by church members. It was no surprise that the amended chapter passed 155-58 with all members of the delegations from the two Conferences in New Jersey voting against the change.³⁶ A simple majority was all that was needed to effectuate this change. For the abolitionists half of the long battle had been won. Only the General Rule remained to be changed and that would occur in 1864.

Why was this support of the status quo so attractive? New Jersey Methodists desired harmony in the church and the nation. Abraham K. Street is probably typical in the concern he expressed about the General Conference of 1860.

In May, 1860, I attended, as a delegate, the General Conference at Buffalo. The slavery question came up in various forms. I was a conservative on that subject at that time. I feared another division in our church, if not of the nation, a catastrophe we had to meet the next year.³⁷

These conservatives sought to buffer anti-slavery sentiment for the sake of ecclesiastical peace.

New Jersey Methodists were also ever sensitive to the prosouthern attitudes prevalent in New Jersey. They reflected the attitudes of their society, a point noted by Harry Richardson:

As a general rule, most Methodists were conservative in racial matters and followed the prevailing social patterns of their areas, both in secular life and in church life. Since segregation in varying forms was the prevailing social rule all over the nation, most Methodists followed their localities. The great majority of Methodists were also conservatives in their attitude toward slavery.³⁸

The Rev. Alfred Brunson in *A Western Pioneer*, written in 1880, provided a similar analysis in his study of the motivations of the delegates from the border conferences at the General Conference of 1860. It reflects accurately the New Jersey experience. Brunson explained that

the brethren from the border conferences in which slavery existed, or from the great commercial imporiums whose merchants dealt with the South, and whose interests were as much with the South as if they actually owned slaves themselves, strongly opposed any change of our rules which were deemed an advance toward the ultimate abolition of this "sum of all villainies;" not because they really favored the system themselves but because it was for the interest of the people they served, to let the system alone, however much wrong it might do the subjects of it, professing to view the evil as incurable.¹⁰

New Jersey had such commerical alliances with the South. Businesses in the northern part of the state, particularly around Newark, depended on southern markets for their products, such as shoes, clothing for the slaves, wagons and carriages. New Jersey was dominated by anti-black and pro-Southern thinking, particularly in the legislature. The clergy had either to confront or to compromise with such attitudes. Compromise seemed better than confrontation.

The division in the nation that was anticipated in the division of the church was at hand. The showdown over church law was incarnated in a national bloodletting.

NOTES

1. *The Discipline*, 1789. The best summary of Methodist rules concerning slavery in Donald G. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 293-303.
2. *The Discipline*, 1824, pp. 189-90.
3. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, p. 114.
4. *Journal*, General Conference (1836), 1:447; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, p. 142. (Hereafter, the *Journal* of the General Conference will be abbreviated *JGC*.)
5. *Journal* (handwritten), New Jersey Conference (1839), pp. 61-62; (1840), pp. 85-86.
6. The New Jersey delegation included pastors Charles Pitman, Manning Force, Richard W. Petherbridge, Isaac Winner, John S. Porter, with John Knox Shaw as reserve. Petherbridge served on the Committee on Slavery and thereby reported the unanimous dissent of the New Jersey Conference from the resolutions on slavery proposed by the New England Conference (*JGC* [1840], pp. 18, 40).
7. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, p. 198.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.
9. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, p. 211.
10. *Journal* (handwritten), New Jersey Conference (1843), pp. 217-18.
11. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, p. 248.

12. *JGC* (1844), pp. 23, 37.
13. Charles Baumer Swaney, *Episcopal Methodism and Slavery* (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1926), pp. 110, 116, 157.
14. *JGC* (1844), p. 123.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, pp. 256-58.
18. *JGC* (1844), p. 73.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-98.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
24. *Journal* (handwritten), New Jersey Conference (1845), p. 274.
25. *Journal*, New Jersey Conference (1860), p. 49.
26. *Journal*, New Jersey Conference (1889), p. 29.
27. From Carlisle, Pennsylvania, October 31, 1844, in the manuscript collections, Drew University.
28. March 21, 1847, Scrapbook B, p. 150, Scrapbooks on Slavery compiled by Abel Stevens, Drew University.
29. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, p. 250 n.
30. Gerald F. Moede, *The Office of Bishop in Methodism, Its History and Development* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 84.
31. Lucius C. Matlack, *The Antislavery Struggle and Triumph in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1881), p. 281.
32. *JGC*, (1856), pp. 126-27.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 244-46.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 254-55.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 255-58.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 258-60.
37. "What I Think of Methodism after Fifty Years in the Itinerancy," Preached Before the New Jersey Conference, Held in Salem, March 11, 1881 (Camden, N.J.: S. Chew, Printer, 1881), p. 22.
38. Harry V. Richardson, *Dark Salvation: The Story of Methodism As It Developed Among Blacks in America* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976), p. 158.
39. Quoted in Swaney, *Episcopal Methodism and Slavery*, pp. 282-83.

THE PURPOSE AND A BRIEF HISTORY OF DELANCO CAMP MEETING

by
H. Raymond Hughes

While this paper is of limited scope, we must understand something of the Wesleyan emphasis upon Christian Perfection if we are to understand the reason for, and the ministry of the Delanco Camp Meeting. Wesley's fervent searching for a knowable experience of salvation, and his constant emphasis upon a moral and ethical holiness of life have left a heritage which, in the thought of many, has been a source of particular strength throughout the church.

It would be good to remember, as we consider Wesley's emphasis, that he was of the Arminian persuasion. By this, we mean that he held the position defined by a Dutch theologian named Arminius, one of the leading opponents of the Calvinism of his day. That Wesley's position coincided so closely with that of Arminius may well be that each man considered himself in the true Catholic tradition, being pre-Augustinian rather than Augustinian.

Coupled with this is the influence mysticism played in forming his theology. Although Wesley condemned the mystics, Nagler points out at least six elements of mysticism found in Wesley's thought.

- “(1) Immediacy of first hand religious experience; Immediate and perceptible inspiration.
- (2) Man possessed a sense, other than reason, by which he came into direct relation with the Infinite.
- (3) The new birth re-established vital union of the soul with God which sin had dissolved; man's personality became unified.
- (4) Illumination after purgation.
- (5) The Inner Light universal.
- (6) Without holiness no man shall see God.”¹

Added to this was the influence of both the Moravians and the German Pietists.

In Wesley's thinking: “Salvation was conceived not merely as a deliverance from hell nor as the assurance of a place in heaven, but as a present deliverance from sin and a renewal of God's image in the heart.”²

Cannon interprets Wesley as follows:

“Perfection is the completion of the development of sanctification begun at regeneration. There, man is given power over outward sin, and love becomes the dominating motive of his life. But, though love dominates in all dealings with other men and is the guide of all his actions, it is not the only motive of his life; and he is tormented by the urges, cravings and dispositions of his old nature, by evil thoughts and suggestions which furnish the occasion for returning to open sin. However, when the Christian reaches the state of entire sanctification, when he attains the goal of perfection, these wrong tempers are taken away, the dispositions which trouble him are made to vanish, and the craving and urge after wrong which by grace he has kept in subjection no longer remain in his soul. Love has entire possession of him.

“Christian perfection, for Wesley, means, therefore, only one thing, and that is purity of motive: the love of God, freed entirely from all the corruptions of natural desire and emancipated completely from any interest in self or in any other person or thing apart from God, guides unhindered every thought and every action of a man's life. In body and mind the perfect Christian is still finite; he makes mistakes in judgment as long as he lives; these mistakes in judgment occasion mistakes in practice, and mistakes in practice often have bad moral consequences. Thus perfection in the sense of infallibility does not exist on the face of the earth.”³

Wesley's *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* most clearly summarizes his position.

Both Asbury and Coke advocated the preaching of sanctification as a definite work of grace. The early itinerants, Ezekiel Cooper, William Watters, Benjamin Abbott, Jesse Lee, Richard Graves, Samuel Coate, and many others, found great joy in leading believers into the life of deeper Christian privilege. Conversion, as it should, remained the principal theme, but perfection was a well remembered corollary.

By 1832, however, the emphasis had to a large degree become neglected, as shown by this extract from the Pastoral Address given to the General Conference in that year.

“Why have we so few living witnesses that ‘the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin?’ Among primitive Methodists, the experience of this high attainment in religion may justly be said to have been common; now, a profession of it is rarely to be met with among us. Is it not time for us, in this matter at least, to return to first principles? Is it not time that we throw off the reproach of inconsistency with which we are charged in regard to this matter? Only let all who have been born of the Spirit, seek, with the same ardor, to be made perfect in love as they sought for the pardon of their sins.”⁴

By the General Conference of 1840 the doctrine had become so neglected that the Bishops addressed the Conference as follows:

"We exhort and beseech you, brethren, by the tender mercies of our God, that you strive for 'the mind that was in Christ Jesus.' Be not content with mere childhood in religion; but, 'go on to perfection.' The doctrine of entire sanctification constitutes a leading feature of original Methodism. But let us not suppose it enough to have this doctrine in our standards; let us labour to have the experience and the power of it in our hearts. Be assured, brethren, that if our influence and usefulness, as a religious community, depend upon one thing more than any other, it is upon our carrying out the great doctrine of sanctification in our life and conversation. When we fail to do this, then shall we lose our preeminence; and the halo of glory which surrounded our heads, and lit up the path of our sainted fathers, will have departed from their unworthy sons."⁵

During the nineteenth century, Methodism within the United States was rent asunder by the reaction against the doctrine of Christian Perfection. Lee and Sweet explain it as follows:

"The old Methodist emphasis upon the doctrine of holiness was largely bypassed, particularly in the city and big-town churches. The result was the rise of what is known as the holiness movement, supported principally by the more humble people. They rightly hold that the doctrine was historically a basic Methodist doctrine, and that they were but asking a return to it. The doctrine of the second blessing also found numerous followers among those whose material blessings were meager."⁶

From within the Methodist Church came sharp repercussions against the doctrine, methods, and practices of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness, while others rallied to its defense. Within the association itself, the error of "come outism" was frowned upon and warned against.

The tension became greater, and increasingly upon each side of the conflict, the reality of the doctrine over which the controversy raged became less and less visible. Within seven years, ten separate religious bodies were organized claiming entire sanctification as their cardinal doctrine. Some of these groups have a continuing history as independent organizations, but most of them sooner or later merged with other groups of similar emphasis. In 1907-08 over half of these groups united to form the Church of the Nazarene.

It was during these days and against a background such as this, that the Fletcher Grove Camp Meeting Association was organized. The prayer and purpose of the founders of this camp was that under God, it might serve within the Methodist Church for the emphasis and propagation of the Wesleyan teaching of Full Salvation.

In the *Conference Minutes of the New Jersey Annual Conference*, 1898, S. W. Lake, Presiding Elder of the Trenton District, reported that Delanco, among other charges, "had enjoyed a gracious revival." The

following year, 1899, he reported to Annual Conference as follows:

"The Fletcher Grove Camp Meeting Association of Delanco, N. J., was organized last year, and the first camp meeting was begun on June 25th, continuing ten days. Great success attended this, their first meeting. Several professed conversion and many believers received the fullness of the Spirit."⁷

The first notice to appear regarding the Camp in an official publication of the Church is found in the *Christian Advocate*, July 14, 1898, and reads as follows:

"A Camp Meeting for the promotion of holiness is now in progress at Delanco on the Delaware. Various members of the National Holiness Association are in attendance. The Reverend George Ridout is in charge."⁸

The "gracious revival" at Delanco to which the Presiding Elder referred had in actuality been a Grove Meeting. Since so many were saved or sanctified as a result of this meeting, the burden to make this an annual affair became greater and greater, and the possibility of purchasing this grove and dedicating it to the Holiness and Salvation purpose became a matter of earnest prayer.

As a result, during the winter of 1898, Reverend George Ridout, Pastor of the local Methodist Church, and Brothers A. C. (Pappy) Ridgeway, owner of a local shoe factory, G. Q. Hammell, a Local Preacher and a commission merchant in Philadelphia, and E. S. Hunter, another commission merchant, called on Mr. C. E. Fletcher, owner of the grove.

After three interviews, this staunch Presbyterian was persuaded to sell the property, some twenty acres, for camp meeting purposes, for four thousand dollars. At this time the amount of fifty dollars was paid to bind the contract. Since Mr. Fletcher was quite deaf, we can imagine the difficulties attending the interviews.

It now remained to raise the thirty-nine hundred and fifty dollars. With this in mind,

"A meeting of persons interested in a movement to organize a camp meeting association was called for Thursday evening, March tenth, in the M. E. Church following the weekly prayer meeting. Rev. George Ridout was elected temporary chairman, E. S. Hunter, temporary secretary, and A. C. Ridgeway, temporary treasurer."⁹

The negotiations with Mr. Fletcher were explained and Mr. Hunter

"stated their plan was to form a stock association issuing shares of small amount so that all could become members and thus increase the interest; to sell off the

clear part of the tract for building lots, and thereby secure enough to cover the amount of purchase money; that the Moorestown Trust Company had offered a loan of three thousand dollars and Mr. J. S. Wright of Merchantville a temporary loan of one thousand dollars."¹⁰

The following week, March seventeenth, another meeting was held with interested parties from Beverly, Bridgeboro, and Riverside as well as Delanco, in attendance. A committee appointed at the previous meeting reported that Mr. Mark Sooy had been secured as counsel, and in order to facilitate the application for articles of Corporation, G. W. Ridout, G. Q. Hammell, R. W. Dickson, E. F. Woolston, and E. S. Hunter agreed to assume the first thousand dollars worth of stock.

After discussion, "Fletcher Grove Camp Meeting Association" was adopted as the official name, and the objects of the association were set forth. These were two:

"The holding of religious gatherings for the salvation of souls and the promotion of Scriptural holiness according to the doctrines and usages of the M. E. Church, and the buying and selling of such real estate as may be necessary to further the interest of the Association."¹¹

By the end of 1908, the first decade of Fletcher Grove Camp Meeting Association had become history. The achievements of these years were many. Not only had a fine boarding house and restaurant been built, a suitable auditorium erected, the Camp debt brought down to a mere six hundred dollars, but the spiritual results were thrilling.

The report of the Reverend Alfred Wagg, Presiding Elder of the Trenton District of the Methodist Episcopal Church, gives evidence of the spiritual condition at that time.

"Fletcher Grove Camp Meeting is the only regular Methodist Camp Meeting within the bounds of the Trenton District. This is located at Delanco on the Delaware River and is indeed the creation of our Methodist Church in this place. Here two camp meetings are held annually; namely, the annual camp meeting from June 21st to July 4th, and the local preachers' camp meeting from August 31st to September 8th. Some 200 seekers were at the altar and 75 persons were converted.

The local preachers' camp meeting is managed entirely by the brethren. They do all the preaching. The first exception to this rule was made last summer when the Presiding Elder of the Trenton District was asked to preach the Sabbath morning sermon. The meetings of the past summer were of great power and very helpful to the hundreds who visited this grove."¹²

Closely connected with the development of the Fletcher Grove Camp Meeting Association was the work of the Local Preachers' Camp Meeting Holiness Association of the New Jersey Conference.

The Local Preachers' Camp Meeting Holiness Association of the New Jersey Conference was not an incorporated body. In reality, it was a voluntary fellowship of Local Preachers within the Conference, who, along with other interested individuals, had united together for the salvation of souls and the promotion of Scriptural holiness.

From the minutes of the Fletcher Grove Camp Meeting Association, we know that the Local Preachers' Association was using the camp grounds for their annual Camp as early as 1905. The Camp was held in the late summer of that year, and from this time forward the life and destiny of the two associations were closely knit.

Although these two camps, with some reorganization, continued as separate entities until they merged in 1946, forming the Delanco Camp Meeting Association, their labors across the years were united. Not only did they use the same facilities and proclaim the same gospel, but the officers and active members of each of these organizations were, with few exceptions, active in both. Through the years a reciprocal relationship proved to be beneficial to both associations. On January 1, 1946, these two associations became one, taking the name "Delanco Camp Meeting Association."

To say that God has blessed and that through the years God has marvelously used the Camp is not to say there were no problems. One of the continual needs from the very beginning has been that of finance. If the only cost were that of each individual encampment, there is no doubt that little difficulty would be encountered. The problem, however, is complicated by the need for year around maintenance, involving auditorium, guest house, dormitories and other buildings. This becomes extremely expensive in light of the short season of use. Through the years some debt has rested on the Camp, and only the sacrificial giving and labor of those too numerous to name has kept the ministry solvent.

With changing times came changing problems. One of these was in regard to recreation for the young people. Some, trained in the old school, looked upon any recreation under the auspices of a holiness camp as being out of order. As late as 1933, it was agreed by a joint committee from each camp that there be no recreation or athletics during the camp.

However, the need for recreation among the youth continued, and in the minutes of the Directors' Meeting, we read the following: "A discussion was held on the advisability of providing proper recreation for the young people attending the Camp Meeting."¹³ By 1941, this had become a reality, so that at the June Directors' Meeting a supervised recreation period was planned with the Reverend G. Nelson Moore as director.

Step by step the recreational program was improved until in 1946 supervised swimming became a part of the program. In 1958, a further step along these lines was taken with the elimination of the afternoon meeting and the establishment of a general recreational program.

One question, struggled with through the years, was whether or not the Camp could carry on concurrently, with the highest effectiveness in both areas, a youth and adult program at the same time. Is it possible to establish such a program that the diverse needs of each of these groups can be met?

As early as 1960, concern was being expressed over the difficulties of carrying on a total camp ministry with the inadequate facilities available, the need to increase our activities through the summer, and the advisability of total renewal of buildings on the Fletcher Grove site or purchase of a more adequate property. In 1961, the directors approved the building of a swimming pool on property immediately adjacent to the Camp, given by Dr. Hammell Shipp. This, however, while helpful, was not enough.

In 1964, after considerable discussion and prayer, it was recommended by the directors and approved by the stockholders that the Fletcher Grove property be sold and that property at Sooy Place, in Tabernacle Township, become the new Camp site. While there were many reservations regarding this move at the time, the evidence of the succeeding years has proven it to be beneficial.

Since moving to this location, many things have happened. A tabernacle has been erected and is being renovated. Two girls' dormitories and one boys' dormitory meet the need for youth accommodations. A guest motel, suitable for Camp needs, has been built. A fine new dining hall and kitchen have just been completed. Lake Agape, in the middle of the Camp has been dredged and beautified. Camp site facilities are now available, and a horse corral makes it possible to offer horseback riding at all Camps. In addition to these, an attractive and comfortable caretaker's home has been built.

Property and buildings mean nothing apart from program. In looking at the achievements since moving to Lake Agape, President Bodine states the following:

"First of all, the Youth work has multiplied. From one Camp Meeting with a small number of young people, we have progressed this year to two Junior Camps at full capacity, one Junior High Camp at over capacity, with 121 beside the staff, and the Teen Camp at half capacity but higher than the total of our youth in Delanco. Besides this, we have weekend retreats from March to November by various churches. In addition, in this period when Camp Meetings are on the decline, our Camp Meeting has also grown in attendance and interest."¹⁴

In closing, we must remember that the life of any institution such as Delanco Camp Meeting is found, not in buildings and properties, nor even in programs, but in the transformed lives of men and women as well as of boys and girls. All of the money that has been spent, all of the buildings that have been built, all of the sacrifices that have been made, and all of the programs that have been presented have been directed toward the goal expressed and already mentioned in the original purposes of incorporation:

"The holding of religious gatherings for the salvation of souls and the promotion of Scriptural holiness according to the doctrines and usages of the M. E. Church."¹⁵

Multitudes of witnesses through the years and many active within our Conference today, both Lay and Clergy, can join together in joyful affirmation that she has been faithful to her purpose.

NOTES

1. Arthur Wilford Nagler, *Pietism and Methodism*, (Richmond: Publishing House Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1918) p. 101.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
3. William Ragsdale Cannon, *The Theology of John Wesley*, (New York: Abingdon—Cokesbury Press, 1946) p. 241.
4. John Leland Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956) pp. 99-100.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
6. Umphrey Lee and W. W. Sweet, *A Short History of Methodism*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956) p. 109.
7. *Minutes of the New Jersey Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1899, p. 55.
8. *The Christian Advocate*, (New York: Methodist Publishing House, 1898) p. 27.
9. *Minutes, Fletcher Grove Camp Meeting Association*, 1898, p. 1.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
12. *Minutes of the New Jersey Annual Conference*, 1908, p. 84.
13. *Minutes, Delanco Camp Meeting Holiness Association*, 1939, p. 1.
14. The Rev. Carlton Bodine, President of Delanco Camp Meeting Association, *Personal Letter*, September 27, 1983.
15. *Ibid.*, FGCM, p. 3.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

You are invited to visit our new Library and Archives Room. We have about three times the space previously available since moving into the first floor of the Bishop's Building on the campus of Pennington School. With the assistance of Miss Susan Clark, who has been helping us ten hours a week since last spring, nearly all our books and archives are now cataloged and in place. Recently, we were given a collection of almost one hundred historical books from the library of Mr. Walter B. VanSant, long time layman of our Conference who has twice served as a delegate to General Conference.

This is the fourth home for our Historical Library. The first was at Old St. George's. Then we moved into a small room in the Conference Building in Cherry Hill. From there we moved into larger quarters in the Meckler Library of Pennington. Now, we hope, we are in permanent quarters.

Much attention of the Society is being given to the writing of our Conference History. It will be authored by Conference Historian, Rev. Robert Steelman. Dr. J. Hillman Coffee, Society President, is Editor-in-Chief. Numerous others are involved in various ways. Your historian has been granted a three month study leave this summer to do the writing. Then will follow several months of editing, picture gathering, re-writing, etc. It is to be placed in the publisher's hands sometime in the summer of 1985. Publication date is Conference 1986.

Members are reminded to be on the look out for historical materials which should be in our library. A rule of thumb is that local church records should be kept in the local church. Records of closed churches, District and Conference records should be in the Conference Archives. General Church records go to the United Methodist Archives Center at Drew University. There should be numerous, past records of Conference Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Committees stored some place which we should have at Pennington. A far more complete history can be told if more of the records are available. Search for them. If you know the whereabouts of any, let us know. It is our responsibility to preserve the archival records of the Conference. You can help us do the job.

You are invited to support the work of your Society by becoming a member. Dues are \$4.00 per person or \$6.00 a couple. Benjamin Abbott

Life Memberships are available for \$50.00 per individual or church. Dues money should be sent to the Financial Secretary, Mrs. Edna Molyneaux, 768 East Garden Road, Vineland, N. J. 08360.

Your interest and support in the work of the Society is greatly appreciated.

REV. ROBERT B. STEELMAN
Historian

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